

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 ICA-11 /062 W
-----024352 311533Z /53

R 311452Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8642
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS
AMCONSUL EDINBURGH
AMCONSUL BELFAST

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 12104

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, UK
SUBJECT: GENERAL ELECTION: GALLUP POLL RESULTS FOR
JULY

REF: LONDON 10316

SUMMARY: THE GALLUP POLL THIS MONTH SHOWED THAT: THE
CONSERVATIVE PARTY HAD MOVED SLIGHTLY AHEAD OF LABOR
IN VOTER PREFERENCE; CALLAGHAN INCREASED HIS LEAD
OVER MRS. THATCHER IN TERMS OF VOTER APPROVAL; THE
GOVERNMENT'S APPROVAL RATING WAS UNCHANGED; PRICES
AND UNEMPLOYMENT REMAIN THE KEY ISSUES; AND A
PLURALTY BELIEVES LABOR WILL WIN THE NEXT ELECTION.
THE POLL ALSO INCLUDED NEW DATA INDICATING THAT 46
PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS THOUGHT CALLAGHAN WOULD MAKE
THE BETTER PRIME MINISTER, WHILE ONLY 28 PERCENT THOUGHT
MRS. THATCHER WOULD BE THE BETTER (THIS COMPARES TO
A STATISTICAL DEADHEAT WHEN THE QUESTION WAS LAST
ASKED IN JULY 1977). DESPITE THE SLIGHT -- AND
STATISTICALLY INSIGNIFICANT -- DECLINE IN LABOR
VOTER PREFERENCE STANDING, THE RESULTS OF THIS MONTH'S
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POLL WERE BROADLY ENCOURAGING FOR CALLAGHAN. END
SUMMARY.

1. VOTER PREFERENCE - EXCLUDING "DON'T KNOWS,"
THE GALLUP POLL OF JULY 20 GAVE THE CONSERVATIVE
PARTY A STATISTICALLY INSIGNIFICANT 2 PERCENT LEAD
OVER LABOR; THIS REPRESENTS A NET TWO POINT IMPROVE-

MENT IN THE TORY POSITION COMPARED TO JUNE (REFTEL).
SUPPORT FOR THE CONSERVATIVES, HOWEVER, DECLINED BY
A HALF POINT, WHILE THAT FOR LABOR FELL BY 2.5
POINTS. LIBERAL SUPPORT INCREASED TO 8.5 PERCENT
FROM LAST MONTH'S 6 PERCENT, RETURNING TO THE LEVEL
OF SUPPORT REGISTERED IN MAY. TWO OTHER POLLS
(MORI AND NOP) TAKEN EARLIER IN THE MONTH REGISTERED
VOTER PREFERENCE ADVANTAGES OF 5 AND 6 PERCENT FOR
THE TORIES. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN THESE RESULTS AND THAT REGISTERED BY GALLUP
REFLECTS SHIFTS IN POPULAR OPINION OR STATISTICAL
VARIATIONS.

2. PERFORMANCE OF GOVERNMENT AND PARTY LEADERS -
THE GOVERNMENT'S APPROVAL RATING REMAINED UNCHANGED
FROM JUNE, WITH 40 PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS GIVING IT
A POSITIVE RATING. ITS DISAPPROVAL RATING, HOWEVER,
DETERIORATED SLIGHTLY, INCREASING FROM 42 TO 44
PERCENT. IN AN APPARENT ANOMALY, CALLAGHAN'S POPULAR
RATING IMPROVED, GOING UP TWO POINTS TO 52 PERCENT,
WHILE HIS RATING ON THE DISSATISFACTION SCALE ALSO
IMPROVED BY DROPPING TWO POINTS TO 39 PERCENT.
THERE WERE NO STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT MOVEMENTS IN
THATCHER'S JULY RATING; 38 PERCENT ON THE SATISFAC-
TION SCALE AND 50 PERCENT ON THE DISSATISFACTION SCALE
(A STATISTICALLY INSIGNIFICANT INCREASE OF 1 PERCENT).
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CALLAGHAN'S LEAD OVER THATCHER ON THIS INDEX INCREASED

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
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FROM 12 TO 14 PERCENT. GALLUP ALSO ASKED RESPONDENTS WHO THEY THOUGHT "WOULD MAKE THE BETTER PRIME MINISTER:" CALLAGHAN LED THATCHER 46 TO 28 PERCENT. THIS QUESTION WAS LAST ASKED IN JULY 1977 WHEN CALLAGHAN LED BY 1 PERCENT.

3. GENERAL ELECTION EXPECTATIONS - LABOR'S 4 POINT JUNE LEAD OVER THE TORIES ON THIS INDEX CLOSED TO A STATISTICALLY INSIGNIFICANT 2 PERCENT IN JULY.

4. URGENT ISSUES - THE RESULTS OF THIS OPEN ENDED SERIES REVEALED NO STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE ISSUES ABOUT WHICH RESPONDENTS ARE MOST CONCERNED. THE MOST URGENT ISSUES (AND THE PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS CITING EACH ISSUE AS "MOST URGENT" FOLLOW: COST OF LIVING AND PRICES, 29 PERCENT; UNEMPLOYMENT, 28 PERCENT; OTHER ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, 7 PERCENT; LAW AND ORDER, 6 PERCENT; IMMIGRANTS, 5 PERCENT; STRIKES AND LABOR RELATIONS, 3 PERCENT; OTHER, 18 PERCENT; AND "DON'T KNOW," 4 PERCENT. AGAIN, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THESE RESULTS WERE GENERALLY CONSISTENT WITH THE RESULTS OF THE "CLOSED ENDED" ISSUES SERIES.

5. INTERPRETIVE COMMENTS: GENERALLY, THOSE CHANGES NOTED BETWEEN JUNE AND JULY WERE STATISTICALLY INSIGNIFICANT. ON BALANCE, HOWEVER, THE RESULTS CONTINUE TO BE FAVORABLE FOR CALLAGHAN AND HIS GOVERNMENT, DESPITE LABOR'S DECLINE ON THE VOTER PREFERENCE INDEX. THERE IS CERTAINLY NOTHING IN THIS DATA WHICH WOULD CAUSE HIM TO DECIDE AGAINST A FALL ELECTION, THOUGH THE EARLIER RESULTS OF THE MORI (LABOR'S OWN POLLING CONTRACTOR) AND NOP POLLS MUST HAVE BEEN DISQUIETING TO HIM. AT THIS POINT IT IS NOT APPARENT WHETHER THESE DIFFERENCES WERE DUE TO A HICCUP IN POPULAR ATTITUDES' STATISTICAL ERROR OR DIVERGENT SAMPLES.

BREWSTER

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